details, but in the spirit. The Hebrew Monarchy came into existence under the influence of a conception, to be found nowhere else in antiquity, which regarded the constitution as the result of a tripartite agreement, or covenant, between the People, the Ruler, and the Deity. This may sound elementary. But, if the Deity is the embodiment of justice and righteousness, it follows that the monarchy is dependent on the maintenance, not only of certain religious, but also of human values. We see this conception in the story of the oldest Hebrew monarch, Saul: it reaches its highest development in the career of David. It underlies the outline of the ideal monarchy which is given in the Mosaic code. And, above all, it is implicit in the whole course of subsequent Hebrew history, when Prophet after Prophet dared to admonish the ruler for his breach of the fundamental laws, for his callousness to human misery, for his oppression of the poor. It is remarkable that in almost all cases (there are few exceptions) the Prophet's reproofs are listened to with forbearance, as though to acknowledge his right to criticise and the fundamental justice of his claim. A remarkable phrase occurs in the description of the king's prerogatives in the Pentateuch (Deuteronomy xvii. 20)—a phrase which sums up the Hebraic ideal of the monarchy: "that his heart be not lifted up *above his brethren."*

In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

when the study of the Bible in the vernacular acquired a new vogue in western Europe, these stories were revitalised. In every land—but especially in the English-speaking countries—pious Christians identified themselves with the Israelites of old, people with people and tyrant with tyrant. When a nation thinks in this way, Absolutism cannot be condoned. In just the same manner as the oppression of Israel by the Court of Samaria had been